

Sergeant 2

A

LETTER

To the D. of P.

IN

ANSWER

TO THE

Arguing Part

OF HIS

W. G. 2nd

FIRST LETTER

To Mr. G.

Published with Allowance.

L O N D O N,

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A

A

L E T T E R

To the D. of P.

In Answer to the Arguing Part of
his First Letter.

1. **T**HAT you may not take it unkindly the Arguing Part of your Letter to Mr. G. should pass unregarded, I have been prevail'd upon to accept of his Commission to hold his Cards, while he is not in Circumstances to play out his Game himself. But can assure you beforehand, since Matter of *Fact* is clearing by other Hands more proper, I mean to confine my self to Matter of *Right*; and so shall give you the least and most excusable trouble that can be, a short one.

2. Your Letter tells us, that the Conference was for the sake of a Gentleman, who I heard desir'd to be satisfi'd that *Protestants* are absolutely certain of what they believe, and made account you could satisfy him, and profess'd, if you could not, he would quit your Communion. And you take care to inform us (p. 2.) that he was satisfi'd, and declar'd immediately after the

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Confe-

Conference, that he was much more confirm'd in the Communion of your Church by it, and resolv'd to continue in it. But could you not have afforded to inform us likewise by what he was satisfi'd? For there is many a Man who would be as glad, and is as much concern'd to be satisfi'd in that Point as that Gentleman; and he would not have been a jot the less confirm'd or the less resolv'd, if his Neighbor had been confirm'd and resolv'd with him. I cannot for my life imagin why you should make a Secret of a thing, which besides your own and your Churches Honor, concerns the Salvation of thousands and thousands to know.

3. Your Letter I perceive would shunt it off to Mr. G. whom you desire (p. 7.) To prove that Protestants have no Absolute Certainty, &c. Of this Proposal there will be occasion to say more by and by. At the present I pray you consider how you deal with those Souls who rely on you. If you should move them to cast their Estates with a Man of your naming, of whom you would give no other satisfaction that he were able to manage them, and faithful, and responsible, but only to bid those who doubted, prove the contrary; I fancy there would need all the Credit you have to hinder the Motion, from appearing very strange. And yet you have the confidence to make them one as much stranger as their Souls are more worth than their Money. For you would have them hazard their Souls where they are not safe, for any care you take to satisfy them that they are. Why, suppose Mr. G. could not prove that Protestants are not Certain, are they therefore Certain? Has Peter Twenty pounds in his Purse, because Paul cannot prove he has not? Or ever the more Title to an Estate, because an Adversary may have the ill luck to be Non-suited? Must not every body speak for him-

self

self one Day; and bring in his own Account, which will
 pass or not as it is or is not; say he is self, whe-
 ther any fault have been found in it, before or not. And
 will not the Happiness or Misery of their Souls for ever
 depend on that Account? Can you suffer them to run
 that terrible hazard, without making them able to ju-
 stifie their Accounts, themselves, and furnishing them
 with Assurance, what they can; and with no more to say
 but that they hop'd Dr. S. would make his Party good
 with Mr. G. That things so precious to God as Souls
 should be of no more value, with those who set up for
 Ministers of the Gospel. That their great and only care,
 as fit and free, should be to make a show, and pass for
 some body there; let every one take his chance, here-
 after. Besides, Truth is therefore *Truth*, because 'tis
 built on Intrinsic Grounds which prove it to be such;
 and not on private Mens Abilities, or their saying this
 or that; wherefore tis these Grounds to be produc'd, it
 cannot be with reason held *Truth*. And Dr. S. is more
 particularly oblig'd to make good he has such Grounds,
 having had such ill fortune formerly with the *Princi-
 ples* to which he undertook to reduce *Protestant Faith*,
 as appears by the Account given of them in *Error Non-
 placit*. *Quid non* Quid non saw Eni. I am not less
 not. But, leaving these Matters to be Answer'd, where
 we must all answer why we have believ'd so and so;
 pray let us have fair play in the mean time. Let every
 one bear his own Burthen, and you not think to dis-
 charge your self by throwing your Load on another
 Mans Shoulders. You affirm there is Absolute Cer-
 tainty on the Protestant side, and 'tis for him to prove
 it who asserts it. If you do it but half so well as Mr. G.
 can, and has; the Infallibility which he asserts, you will
 earn Thanks from one side, and Admiration from the
 other.

other. But it is for you to do it. To trick off proving the contrary upon your Adversary, is to own what *Proving* is a thing which agrees not with your Constitution, and in which your Heart misgives you.

Yet even so you were uneasy still, and would not venture what Mr. G. could do, as slightly as you think, or would have others think of him. You know well enough, that to prove Protestants have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith, is no hard Task even for a weak Man: You know any Man may find it confess'd to his hand by Protestants. And therefore you had reason to bethink your self of an Expedient to trick it off again

*Dr Tillotson's
Rule of Faith,
p. 117, 118.*

Page 7.

from that Point, and put Mr. G. to prove, That Protestants have no Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of their Faith, viz. the Scripture. The Merits of this Cause too I think will return hereafter more fully: in this place I mind only the *Mrs.* Pray, was not the very Birth Question at the Conference, *Whether Protestants are Absolutely Certain that they hold now the same Tenets in Faith, and All that our Saviour taught to his Apostles?* And your Answer that *They are?* Did our Saviour teach, and do Protestants believe no more, than that the Book so call'd is Scripture? Is Certainty of this more, and Certainty of this Book all one? And was not the Question plainly of the Certainty of this, and of *All this more?* Here is then an Enquiry after one thing plainly turn'd off to another. Yes; but this was one of the *two things which the whole Conference depended upon.* As if the whole Conference did not depend on that thing which was to be made manifest by the Conference, viz. the *Absolute Certainty of Protestant Faith.* Mr. G. indeed did himself ask some Questions about your Certainty of your Rule; Questions, whose course it was wisely done to cut off, before they had question'd away your Certainty of Faith. For,

*Dr. St's Second
Letter, p. 14.*

after

after they had caus'd it to be admitted, that the Certainty of Scripture is from Tradition, there was no refusing to admit that Tradition causes Certainty; and makes Faith as Certain as Scripture. And then it would have prov'd something difficult to satisfy even a willing Man, that the Faith is Certain which is opposit to a Faith come down by Tradition. But it was seen whereto it would come, and thought fit to break off in time, and not let the Conference proceed too far. In the mean time Absolute Certainty of Scripture was not the Point of the Conference, nor is it the Point of Concern. Besides that 'tis agreed on all hands, Men are Sav'd by *Believing* and *Practising* what *Christ* taught, not barely by believing *Scripture is Scripture*: And Salvation is the thing that imports us in these Disputes, and 'twere well that nothing else were minded by Disputers. But it imported you it seems both to shift off *Proving* from your self, and to stifle any further Talk of the Certainty of Protestant Faith, and keep us from looking that way by fixing our Eyes on another Object. And this is all you do; but with so much Art, that I verily think many a Reader is persuaded you are talking all the while to the purpose. The truth is, you have reason to carry it as you do; for it is good to avoid undertaking what cannot be perform'd: And you cannot, and I believe *know you cannot* make out, That Protestants are Absolutely Certain, that they now hold all the same Doctrine that was taught by *Christ* and his Apostles, as you affirm'd in your Answer to Mr. G's first Question. And this I thought it imported to tell you plainly and publicly, that it might be in your hands to pin the Controversie basket, and bring all Catholics to your Church; where I will answer you will be sure to find us, if you make us sure we shall find this Certainty there when we come.

if they did this from Christ's time and so forwards they must still continue to believe to the end of the World the self-same that Christ and his Apostles taught; and therefore cannot err in Faith, unless those Authors of our Faith did: Which that they did not, is not to be proved as Christians.

There follows this Inference: *[Therefore they are Infallible]*. This is no less plainly self-evident. For these words *[They can never err in Faith]* in the Antecedent, and *[They are Infallible]* in the Consequent, are most manifestly the self-same in sense, and perfectly equivalent.

The fourth and last (which according to you, aim'd to prove, that they could not innovate) is this. *[They could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it.]* And this is no less unexceptionable than its fellows. For, if they *know* not they alter'd Faith, when they alter'd it, they had forgot what they believ'd the day before. If they alter'd it *wittingly*, excuse them from *Malice* who can; who, believing, as all who proceed upon Tradition do, that Tradition is the certain Means to convey the Doctrine of Christ, would not withstanding alter the Doctrine convey'd to them by Tradition. Pray what ails this Argument? and what wants it, save bare Application, to conclude what was intended as fully and as rigorously as you can desire? And pray, what need was there to apply it to the Roman Church, and say she follow'd Tradition, to you who deny it not either of the Roman or Greek Church? As every thing is true, and every thing clear; who now besides your self would have thought of an evasion from it? And yet you venture at one, such as it is.

You tell us then, *That you show by the best way*

in these the quality of the same Demonstration, but not the
act or Influence of such as follow'd Tradition, and yet Mr.
G. could not deny to have said, and that was of the Great
Church, &c. You had e'en as good have said, what Mr.
G. says is true, but yet he does not say true for all that.
 For to pitch upon nothing for false, is, in Disputes, to
 own that every thing is true. The best way, say you?
 I should have thought it every Joe as good a way to
 have said nothing when one has nothing to say. But
 yet the World is oblig'd to you for letting them know
 what Schollars knew before, that Protestants *that is*
the best way to answer Catholic Arguments, to give
 them no Answer at all: For you are not to be told
 that this Instance of yours is not an Answer to Mr.
 G.'s Argument, but a new Argument against him of
 your own, which undoubtedly you might have pro-
 duc'd as well as my Lord Falkland, if you had been, as
 my Lord Falkland was, *orwise*. But it is your turn now
 to answer. And must you be minded of what every
 Smatterer in Logic knows, that an Answerer is con-
 fin'd to his *Concedo*, his *Nego*, and *Disjunctio*, as the
 Propositions which he is to speak to, are True, False
 or Ambiguous? He may deny the Inference too, if he
 find more or other Terms in the Conclusion than in
 the Premises. But *these* are his Bounds: and Answer-
 ing turns Babbling, when they are exceeded. Must
 you be minded that the Business must be stop'd before it
 come to the Conclusion; and that otherwise there is
 no speaking against it? For you know that if the Pre-
 mises be right, and the Inference good, the Conclusi-
 on must be as necessarily True, as it is that the same
 thing cannot be, and yet be at once; that is, must be
 more certain than that *Exemplum*, for Example, shall not
 be made into a Stone, or be swallow'd up in the Sea to-
 morrow:

incoherent; But this, and a thousand such things, may
 happen to all material Nature; that a Contradicti-
 on should prove True, *cannot*. And 'tis perfect Con-
 tradiction that Terms which cohere in the Premises, by
 being the same with a Third, should not cohere with
 one another in the Conclusion. Must you be minded that
 an *Arguer* is to *prove* his Conclusion, and an *Answerer* to
 shew he does not, by assigning where and how he fails?
 Do you do any such matter? Do you so much as go
 about it? And would you have what you say pass for
 an Answer? Pray consider the Case: The Church of
 Rome is Infallible, says Mr. G. She is not, say you.
 He brings his Argument, and you your Instance against
 it. What are People the wiser now? and which shall
 they be for; the Argument or the Instance? They
 have reason to think well of the *Argument*, because
 you have no fault to find with it; and they may think
 as they please of the *Instance*. You would not, I sup-
 pose, have them believe you both, and think the
 Church of Rome for your sake *Fallible*, and, for his, *In-
 fallible* at once. Pray what assistance do you afford
 them to determine either way? And what do you more
 than let leave them to draw Cuts, and venture their
 Souls as handy dandy shall decide, for you or Mr. G.?
 'Tis true, when Zeno would needs be paradoxing against
 the possibility of Motion, his Vanity was not ill rid-
 cul'd by the walking of *Diogenes* before him. For 'twas
 palpably and ridiculously *vain* to talk against Motion
 with a Tongue, that must needs move to all against
 it. And there may be *vain* too in our Case, for
 ought I know: But where shall it be lodg'd? Why
 more with Mr. G's Argument than your Instance?
 Why is it more *vain* to pretend to prove Infallibility
 upon which depend the Hopes which Millions and Mil-

lions have of a blessed Eternity; and which is proved
 by Arguments, to which you think it is *not* proper
 to attempt to Answer, than it is to except against a
 Conclusion, against the Premises whereof there lies no
 Exception? That is to find fault with a Sum Total,
 and find none in the particulars; or the casting up
 for a Conclusion is a kind of Sum Total of the Pre-
 mises. But it is infinitely more *wise* to talk against
 one Infallibility, unless you will set up another. For,
 if there be no Means, by which Men may be secur'd,
 that the ways they take to arrive at their greatest and
 only Good will not *deceive* them; it cannot be expect-
 ed they will take all the pains that are necessary to
 compass that Good, which for ought they can tell, they
 may not compass with all their pains. 'Tis a pleasant
 thing in you to talk of the *vanity* of Mr. G's Demon-
 stration, when by seeking to take Infallibility out of the
 World, you are making the whole Creation vain. For
 all Material Nature was made for Rational Satisfaction in all
 its proceedings, and most of all in the pursuit of Hap-
 piness. And what Rational Satisfaction can there be,
 if there may be *Deceit* in whatever can be propos'd for
 Satisfaction? In short, the Result of your Illastance;
 whatever was the Aim, it is to amuse and confound
 People, and hinder them perhaps from seeing what
 otherwise would be clear; but it shows them nothing,
 nor *does* for that Argument of yours is not at all of a
theiving Nature.

13. 'Tis, at best, but an Argument (as they call it)
ad hominem; which you know are of the worst sort of
 Arguments. They serve for nothing but to stop an
 Adversaries mouth, or shame him, if he cannot answer
 without contradicting himself; but are of no use to-
 wards

was the Discovery of *truth*. For a thing is not the more or less True, because such a Man's Tongue is ty'd up for speaking against it. *But* is it so much as an Argument *ad hominem*? As all the little force of the Topic consists in the Obligation which a Man may have to grant or deny what it *supposes* he does, it affords no Argument at all against the Man who has no such Obligation. And pray where does it appear that Mr. G. is oblig'd not to deny that the Greek Church has err'd in matters of Faith? And how can *you*, of all Men, suppose *he* is? You, who in your Rational Account (p. 94.) quote these words from *Peter Lombard*; *The Differences between the Greek and Latins, is in Words and not in Sense*: Name *Thomas à Jesu*, and *Azorius*, and tell us of other Roman Catholic Authors, of the same judgment, whom I suppose you could name. Pray, how comes Mr. G. to lye under an Obligation, from which Men of Reputation in his own Communion are exempt? And what a wise Argument *ad hominem* have you made against him, whom your self have furnish'd with an Argument *ad hominem* to confute it when he pleases? In fine, he goes to work, like a Scholar, puts his Premises, and infers his Conclusion, which you know cannot but be True, if there be no Fault in his Premises. And 'tis for you to find one when you can. You put nothing to shew how the Inference you make should be True, but barely assume without proof, that it *cannot deny it to be so*. As if Truth depended on his Denying or Affirming, and that what People favor think, made things True or False. And even, for so much, you are at his Courtship. If he be not the better Natur'd, and will crossly affirm or deny in the wrong place, you and your Argument are left in the lurch. In a word, one may see he aims at Truth, who takes

at least the way to it: what you aim'd at, you best know: but no body shall ever discover what his aim is, but True, by your Method. But that you may not complain, your Cock is not suffer'd to fight, let us see what your Instance will do. You put it thus (p. 3.) *The Greek Church went upon Tradition from Father to Son, as much as even the Roman did.* And I apply'd to them of Mr. G. whether the Greek Church notion of standing did not rest in matters of Faith; And, if it did, then a Church holding to Tradition was not Infalible. How? If it did? Why then it is apparent if it did not, your Argument holds not. And will you assume that the Greek Church errs, with believe she does not? Will you take a Premise to infer a Conclusion, upon which the Salvation of People depends, which Premise your self in your own heart think is not true? Can you deal thus with their Souls, who pin them upon you, persuade them of what you are not persuaded your self, and offer them a Security for their Eternity, in which your own judgment tells you there is a flaw? For you have declar'd your self upon this Matter in your *Rational Account*, and taken great pains to clear the Greek Church, at least upon the Article of the Holy Ghost, in which consists their main difference with the Latins, and to which the other two you mention were added. I suppose, for nothing else. But now you there propose to free that Church from the charge of Heresy. But pray what instance do you give? *Protestant Error is much of Fair* unless you will resist above Obstinacy, and such considerations, which neither concern us here, nor were any part of your Defense there. I repeat that you word is but conditionally, and with reference to Mr. G's Answer. As if his Answer made

or err'd, and the Greek Church did or did not err, as
 he says, I, or you. *Whatsoever Mr. G. may say, or you*
have said, unless the Greek Church really does Err,
 your Instance is no Instance of a Church that goes
 upon Tradition and Errs; and your Inference that
such a Church falling to Tradition, will not be fallacious is
 wondrous pertinently infer'd from the Example of a
 Church that *errs* not. Pray take it well that I instruct
 you by all the care you have of your own Soul, and
 should have of others, to manage Disputes about Faith
 a little otherwise, and not propole Arguments, in
 which you must needs think your self there is no force.
 For there is plainly none in this, if the Greek Church
does not err, and you at least think she does not. I
 am sure tis what I would not do any self for all the
 World.

But to proceed to Mr. G's Answer, (p. 114).
 He says, *that the Greek Church still follows Tradition, and the*
Arians left that Rule and took up a new one, &c. And why
 has he not answer'd well? You admit that the Greek
 Church err'd while it went upon Tradition; If you
 did not, you said nothing; for, that a Church may
 follow Tradition at one time, and leave it at another,
 is no news. 'Tis the case of all erring Churches which
 ever follow'd Tradition at all. Mr. G's Reply then that
 Tradition was follow'd till another Rule was taken up,
 denies that Tradition and Error were found together,
 as you contended, in the Greek Church. And pray
 what more direct or more full Answer can there be to
 an Argument, than to deny the Premises? As slightly as
 you would seem to think of him, he understood dis-
 puting better than to start aside into an Exception
 against your Objection, and answers full and home by
 denying the Assumption from which you infer it;
 which

which now he has done, you may infer with you to prove it: and yet you have not done so, as far as I see, but as you have done, so to do, this concluding against Mr. G. for looking on the *Agens*, and not on the protestant Greek Church: and against his Copy, for having put the Inference which you draw. In doing which, it is said for the sake of no small kindness, them being so, *Premises* to draw the Inference from, as has been shewn above: or if any such as put you to contradict your own Doctrine ere any thing could follow from them.

16. As for the relation of the Inference, I know not how it happens, nor mean to meddle with matter of Fact. But I see they had reason who observ'd before me, that in a thing of no manner of Consequence I verily think, in your own Judgment. Unless you think the Age we live in so dull, that without much hammering it into their Heads, it cannot be perceiv'd that if a Church *err'd* which held to Tradition, a Church *err'd* which holds to Tradition. Or, unless you think it of mighty Consequence to have an Inference stand in the Relation which fell with the Premises of the Conference. Mr. G. took them away by his denial, and you must begin again, and bring something from whence you may draw an Inference, if you will needs have an Inference; for an Inference cannot be drawn from nothing. Pray divert us not perpetually from minding what we are about: but remember the Question now is, Whether the Greek Church held to Tradition and *err'd* at once? and bethink your self, if you please of a *Medium*, which will infer that Point for you; for Mr. G. you see denies it.

17. From his mentioning the *Agens* you take occasion to speak big, and bear as in hand as was hard put to it,

in, and sought an occasion, and affirm (p. 6.) you could get no Answer at all to the Case of the present Greek Church. As if his Answer pincht on the *Arians*, and were not as full to the present as past Greek Church. It goes on this, That those who err in Faith, let them be who they will, and the Error what it will, and in what Time and Place you will, all leave Tradition. Whether the Case of the present Greek Church be the same with the *Arians*, is matter of *Faith*, with which Mr. G. did well not to meddle; it is for you to make it out, if you will make good your Argument. Modern or Ancient Heresie is all one to his Answer, which is applicable to *all* Heresie: And you complain of the want of an Answer when you *have* one. Pray, if a Man should put an Objection to you about an Animal, for Example, and you answer it of *all* Animals, would you think it just in him to quarrel with you for not mentioning the Rational or Irrational in particular? And yet this is your Quarrel to Mr. G. All your magnificent Talk (p. 6.) of *undeniably true, granted by Mr. G. known to every one, &c.* as apt as I see it is to make a Reader believe your Instance is notoriously true, and against which Mr. G. has nothing to say, cannot make me, or any Man of Reason, who examines the Point, believe he has any Reason to say more, till you do. He has answer'd directly, and positively deny'd, that Error and Tradition can be found together in the Greek Church, or any other, modern or ancient. There it sticks, and you may drive it on farther (it being your own Argument) if you please. Only when you tell us (p. 6.) that the present Greek Church *in all its Differences with the Roman, still pleaded Tradition, and adher'd to it*, I wish you had told us whether you speak of Differences in *matter of Faith*, or no. For Differences may be occasi-

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on'd

said by matters of Faith, which are not Differences in
 Faith. If you do not, you support your *Testimony* very
 weakly, and prove the consistence of Tradition with
 Error in Faith very Learnedly, from Differences which
 belong not to Faith. If you do, as Nature teaches a most
 strange Sight, I long to see by what Differences, or any
 thing else, it can be made out, That an erring Church
 can *plead Tradition, and adhere to it*. Not that that for
Pleading much may be, there are such confident doings
 in the World. As certain as it is, that the Religion in
 England now, is not the same which it was before
 Henry the Eighth, I think there is confidence enough
 in England to plead Tradition for it. 'Tis but finding
 some Expression in an ancient Writer, not couch'd with
 Propheticall foresight enough to avoid being understood,
 as some will desire it should, and it will serve turn to
 pretend to Antiquity, and bear the Name of Tradition.
 So I suspect you take it your self, when you say the
Arians insist on Tradition: For sure you do not think
 in earnest, that Doctrine contrary to Consubstantiality,
 was taught by *Christ*, and believ'd from Father to Son,
 till the Council of *Nice*. Then, or some such thing may
 perhaps have been *pleaded*; but for *adhering to Tradition*.
 Your Servant. For, pray, did *Christ* teach any Error?
 When a Father believ'd what *Christ* taught him, and the
 Son what the Father believ'd, did not the Son too be-
 lieve what *Christ* taught? Run it on to the last Son that
 shall be born in the World, must not every one believe
 what *Christ* taught, if every one believ'd what his Fa-
 ther believ'd? And will you go about to persuade us,
 that there actually is a company of Men in the World
 who *adher'd* to this Method, all Sons believing always
 as their Fathers did, whereas the First believ'd as *Christ*
 taught, and who notwithstanding w'd in matters of
 Faith.

Faith? They would thank you for making this out, who would be glad that *Christ* taught Error and were not God. But it is not plainer that Two and Three make Five, than it is that this cannot be. And yet you would top it upon us, and bear us in hand it is not only true, but apparent in the Greek Church, and known to every body who knows any thing of it. The comfort is, there is nothing for all these Assertions but your Word; in which, where you stick not to pass it for an arrant Impossibility, I for my part do not think there is Absolute Certainty.

18. I see not what there remains more, but to bear in mind where we are. At the Conference, instead of answering Mr. G's Argument, you would needs make one of your own, which was in short; *The Greek Church goes upon Tradition and errs, therefore another Church may err which goes upon Tradition.* There was no need to trouble the Greek Church for the matter: It had been altogether as methodical, and as much to purpose, to have instanc'd in the Latin Church it self, and never gon further; and shorter, to have spar'd Instancing too, and have said without more ado, *Mr. G's Conclusion is not true*: For you do no more, till you make it appear, that the Church you pitch upon for an Instance, do's indeed adhere to Tradition and err. But, because this had been too open, and People would have sooner perceiv'd that it had been to say, *I know not how to answer Mr. G's Argument, but will notwithstanding stand to it, that his Conclusion is false*, you thought the best way to divert the Reader's attention from what's before him, was to travel into Greece; and yet when you come there, do no more than if you had stay'd at home: For you barely say there is both Tradition and Error in the Greek Church, and you might have said

as much of the Latin; or, without mentioning either, have said, *Tho' Mr. G. has prov'd a Traditionary Church cannot err, I say it can and has.* All is but *Saying* till you come to *Proving*: Only to make a formal shew with an Antecedent and a Conclusion, you say it with the Ceremony of an Argument; of which since Mr. G. deny'd the Antecedent, he had no more to do till you prov'd it.

19. So it stood at the Conference, and so it stands still, and for ought I see, is like to stand: For tho' you have writ two Letters since, there appears no word of Proof in either, or sign that you do so much as think on it: You only say your Instance over again, and would have the Face you set upon it, and great Words you give it, make it pass for plain and undeniable, when all the while it is plainly impossible, and actually deny'd. Mr. G. I hope, will bide by his Answer, because it is a good one, true in it self, and direct to the Point: For it denies just what you assum'd, That the Greek Church stood upon Tradition, and fell at the same time into Error. And speaking as you do, or should do, of Error in matter of Faith, *Heckel* never made any thing plainer than it is, That where ever Error comes in, Tradition goes out. Of necessity therefore, if the present Greek Church have adher'd to Tradition, It has not err'd: If it have err'd, it has not adher'd to Tradition. Which of the two is the Case, neither concerns Mr. G. nor can he dispute it without following bad Example, that is, falling to Argue now it is his Part to Answer. You would pass it upon us, that the Greek Church has err'd without swerving from Tradition: and you must either make it out, or acknowledge you have made much ado about nothing: For your Instance is no Instance, till it appears to be true; Till you do it, there is no Work for Mr. G.

18th At the close (p. 7.) you desire Mr. G. to make good two things, and tell us why you desire it, and what will follow if he accept or decline your Motion. I neither understand how your Proposals follow from your Reasons, nor your Consequences from your Proposals. But think it no more worth losing time upon them, than you thought it worth boasting of the Victory. The First is, That we [Protestants] have no Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of our Faith; viz. the Scripture; altho' we have a latter and former Tradition for it; viz. the Consent of all Christian Churches; than you [Catholics] can have for the Points of Faith in difference between us.

21. I can tell you a better Reason for this Proposal than any you give. There was no avoiding to own Absolute Certainty to a Man who talk'd of quitting your Communion without it. But you knew well enough that your Absolute Certainty would be thwittled into Sufficient Certainty, and Sufficient Certainty into no Certainty at last; and had your Wits about you when you thought of this Proposal. For it is in effect to say, This Certainty of Faith is a troublesome matter; and not for my turn; Let us go to something else, leave Faith and pass to Scripture; of which you, Mr. G. shall prove we have no Absolute Certainty. For, if I should go about to prove we have, I foresee, that while I am seeking harbor in my larger and former Tradition, I shall venture to split upon your Infallibility, as contradictory to 15th Principle for the Faith of Protestants, and fall at once into the Snares laid for me in Error Nonplust; from p. 90 to p. 96; which I have no mind to come near. But whatever Reasons you had to make this Proposal, I see none that Mr. G. has to accept it. Do you prove, if you please, that you have Absolute Certainty; you, who bear those in hand who consult you, that you have; and Absolute Certainty

There can be no necessity sup-
posed of any In-
fallible Society
of Men, either
to attest or ex-
plain these Wri-
tings among
Christians.
Dr. St. Prin-
ciple 15.

tob of that of which you profess'd your self absolutely
 Certain, *viz.* That you *now* hold all the same Doctrine
Dr. St's Copy. that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; which by your
 own confession there, is the true Point. For you know
 very well, one is not certain of his Faith by being cer-
 tain of Scripture. Your self take all who dissent from
 yours, to have not only an Uncertain, but a Wrong Faith,
 else why do you dissent from them? And yet they
 have all as much Certainty of Scripture as you. The
 truth is, if you were prest to make out your Absolute
 Certainty even of Scripture in your way, you would
 perhaps find a hard Task of it, for all your Appeal to
 Tradition. But it was not the Point for which the
 Conference was, nor ought it be the Point here; nei-
 ther ought Mr. G. to meddle with it, and you trust
 much to his good Nature to propose it: For, besides
 that all the thanks he would have for his pains, would
 be to have the Arguments against your Certainty,
 turn'd against the Certainty of Scripture one day, as if
 he did not believe Scripture Certain: You would have
 him undertake a matter in which he has no concern, to
 save you from an Undertaking in which you are deeply
 concern'd, but with which you know not how to go
 thorow; which is a very reasonable Request. In a
 word, it is for you either to make manifest now, what
 you should have made manifest at the Conference, *viz.*
 That Protestants have Absolute Certainty, not only
 of the Scripture, which they call their Rule, but of the
 Faith which they pretend to have from that Rule; or
 else to suffer another thing to be manifest, *viz.* That I
 said true when I said you cannot do it; and thither I am
 sure it will come.

22. However, I am glad to hear any Talk from you
 of Absolute Certainty, even tho' it be but Talk: 'Tis a
 great

gent Stranger, as coming from your Quarters, and has a friendly and an accommodating look, and therefore for both regards deserves a hearty welcome. For this very Profession makes a fair approach towards the Doctrine of *Infallibility*, or rather 'tis the self-same with it; it being against Common Sense to say you judge your self *Absolutely Certain* of any thing, if at the same time you judge you may be *deceiv'd* in thus judging. But I accept the *Omn* that you seem to grant you are thus *Absolutely Certain*, or Infallible, by virtue of Tradition; for this makes Tradition to be an Infallible Ascertainer in *some* things at least; and, so, unless some special difficulty be found in *other* things that light into the same Channel, it must needs bring *them* down infallibly too. Now I cannot for my heart discern what great difficulty there can be to remember all along the yesterdays Faith, or to be willing to be guided and instructed by their yesterdays Fathers, Teachers and Pastors; especially the sense of the Points (to omit many other means) being determin'd by open and daily Practice. Yet I a little fear all this your seeming kindness for Tradition, is only for your own Interest; and that, because you were necessitated to make use of it to abet Scripture's Letter, you allow it in that regard, these high Complements; but in other things, particularly in conveying down a Body of Christian Faith (which is incomparably more easie) it will prove as useless and good for nothing. In the former *usage* you esteem it *A worthy Rule*, but in the latter *usage*, *A Rule worthy*.—

24. Now to let the Reader plainly see that it was more Force, and not Inclination, which oblig'd you to grant an Absolute Certainty in Tradition conveying down Scriptures Letter, we will examin what you allow'd:

allow'd it when you laid your *Principles*, and so spoke your own free thoughts unconstrain'd by any Adversary: Your fifteenth Principle is put down (p. 90.) in *Error Nonplus*, and that part of it that concerns this present Point, is thus reflected upon by your Adversary (p. 92, 93.) [*Again, tho all this were true, and thus the Scriptures were own'd as containing in them the whole Will of God so plainly reveal'd, that no sober Enquirer can miss of what's necessary to Salvation, and thus therefore there needed no Church to explain them: Yet 'tis a strange Consequence, that therefore there can be no necessary of any Infallible Society of Men to Attest them, or to witness that the Letter of Scripture is right, This is so far from following out of the former part of Dr. St's. Discourse, that the contrary ought to follow; or, from prejudicing his own pretence, that it conduces exceedingly to it. For certainly his Sober Enquirer would less be in doubt to miss of what's necessary to Salvation in case the Letter, on which all depends, be well attested, than if it be not; and most certainly an Infallible Society of Men can better attest that Letter than a Fallible one: and those Writings can with better shew of Reason be own'd to contain in them the Will of God, if their Letter be attested beyond possibility of being wrong, than if left in a possibility of being such; for if the Letter be wrong, All is wrong in this case.—*] As manifest then as 'tis, that to be *Absolutely Certain* of any thing, is not to be *Fallibly Certain* of it; that is, as manifest as 'tis, that to be *Absolutely Certain* of a thing, is to be *Infallibly Certain* of it; so manifest it is, that you *there* contradict your self *here*, and, that, however you may endeavour to come off, you allow not heartily, nor without some regret and reluctancy, an *Absolute Certainty* to Tradition, even in *Attesting Scripture's Letter*.

24. In these words of yours (p. 7) [*As to the Rule of our Faith*] give me leave to reflect on the word [OUR] and thence to ask you, *who are YOU?* A Question which I ask not of your Name or Surname, but of your Judgment (as you call it) of Discretion. Are you a Socinian, an Arian, a Sabellian, an Eutychian, &c. or what are you? Are you a whole, or a half, or a Quarter-nine-and-thirty-Article Man? Do you take them for Sharps, or Fences, and when for the one, and when for the other, and wherefore? These words [*The Rule of OUR Faith*] make you all these at once; for all these profess unanimously Scripture's Letter is *their* Rule of Faith. Mr. G. when he came to your House, imagin'd he was to treat with a *Protestant*, or something like it, and to have learn'd from you what Absolute Certainty you would assign for *your*, (that is, *Protestant*) Faith; and you give him only a Generical Latrocinarian Rule, common to all the Heresies in the World. The Project of the Comprehension-Bill was a trifle to this: It brings into one Fold all the most enormous Straglers that have been since Christ's time, nay Wolves, and Sheep and all. It blends into one Mass the most heterogeneous and hitherto irreconcilable Sects. Nay, it miraculously makes Light and Darkness very consistent, and *Christ* and *Belial* very good Friends. For your own Credit sake then distinguish your kind of Protestants (if you be indeed one of that Church) from that infamous Rabble of stigmatiz'd Heretics; and let us know what is the Proper Difference that restrains that Notion of a *Common* Rule to your *particular*, as such a kind of *Protestant*, and shew us that *specific* Rule to be Absolutely Certain. Nay, *show a kind* for even the word *Protestant* too is a *Subaltern* Genus, and has divers Species,

and 'tis doubted by many, who are no Papists; under which Species you are to be rankt. But, why should I vex you with putting you upon manifest Impossibilities? For the Letter being the common Rule to them all, and, as daily experience shews us, variously explicable, that which particularizes it to belong specially to this or that Sect, as its proper Rule, can be, only this, *[According to my self, and those of my Judgment understand or interpret it.]* The Difference then constituting your Protestant Rule, as distinguisht from that of those most abominable Heresies, can only be *[as my own Judgment, or others of my side, thus or thus interpret Scripture & Letter]* and wriggle which way you please, there it will and must end at last. Go to work then, distinguish your self by your Ground of Faith, and then make out this your proper Rule to be *Absolutely Certain or Infallible*, and then, who will not laugh at you for attempting it, and assuming that to your self, which you deny to God's Church, and preferring your self as to the Gift of Understanding Scripture right, before the whole body of those many and Learned Churches in Communion with Rome? Nay, and before the Socinians too; without so much as pretending to make out to the World, that you have better Means, either Natural or Supernatural, to interpret those Sacred Oracles, than had the others.

25. My last Exception is, that you pretend the Letter of Scripture is a Rule of Faith for your People, which not one in a Million, even of your own Protestants relies on, or ever thinks of relying on, in order to make choice of their Faith, or determining what to hold. This pretence of yours looks so like a meer Jest, that I cannot persuade my self you are in earnest, when you advance such a Paradox. For 'tis manifest

that while *your* Protestants are under Age, and not yet at years of Discretion to judge, they simply believe their Fathers and Teachers; that is, they follow the way of Tradition, however misplac'd. And, when they come to Maturity, pray tell us truly, how many of your *Sober Enquirers* have you met with in your life, who endeavour to abstract from all the prejudices they have imbib'd in their Minority, and, reducing their inclin'd thoughts to an equal Balance of Indifferency, do with a wise Jealousie, lest this Popish way of believing immediate Fathers and Pastors should delude them, as it has done the whole World formerly, resolve to examin the Book of Scripture in self, read it attentively, pray daily and fervently, that God's Spirit would discover to them, whether what they have learn'd hitherto be true or no, and what is; and, in a word, use all the Fallible means (for you allow them no other) which your *Sober Enquirers* are to make use of, to find out their Faith? I doubt, if you would please to answer sincerely, you would seriously confess you scarce ever met with such a one in your life; that is, never met with any one who rely'd upon Scripture's Letter *practically* for his Rule of Faith; whatever you may have taught them to *salk* by rote. Can any Man of Reason imagin, that all the Reformed in *Denmark* or *Saxony* (to omit others) did light to be so unanimously of one Religion, merely by means of reading your *Letter Rule*, and your *Sober Enquiry*? Or can any be so blind as not to see, that 'tis the following the natural way of Tradition; or Childrens believing Fathers (that is, indeed, of Education); that such multitudes in several places, continue still of the same persuasion; and that you consequently owe to this way, which you so deny in Catholics, that any considerable

another of you do voluntarily hang together at all?
 And that those Principles of yours, which you take up
 for a shew, when you write against Catholics, would,
 if put in practice, in a short time crumble to Atoms all
 the Churches in the World? Perhaps, indeed, when
 your Protestants come of Age, they may receive some
 Confirmation from their Fathers and Preachers, quoting
 Scripture places against what Catholics hold, or what
 they shall please to say they hold; and by the same
 means come to believe a Trinity, the Godhead of Christ,
 Christ's Body being absent in the Sacrament, and such
 like; but do the Hearers and Learners make it their
 business to use all careful disquisition (for a stubbing
 superficial diligence will not serve the turn in mat-
 ters of such high Concern) whether the Catholics, and
 those great Scripturists, who deny those other Points,
 do not give more congruous explanations of those places
 than their own Preachers do? unless they do this, or
 something equivalent, 'tis manifest the Letter of Scrip-
 ture is not their Rule, but honest Tradition. And
 that they do no such thing, is hence very apparent, that
 they rest easily satisfied, and well appeased with their
 Parson's interpretation of Scripture, they presently ac-
 cept it for right and good, and readily swallow that
 sense, which some Learned Men, of their own judg-
 ment, assign it, without thinking themselves oblig'd
 to observe your Method of *Self Enquiry*. You may
 rail against the Council of *Trent*, as you will, for for-
 bidding any to interpret Scripture against the Sense
 which the Church holds; but 'tis no more than what
 your Hearers perpetually practise; and the Preachers
 too (for all their fair words) expect from them. And
 I much doubt even your self (that your Principles
 are the most pernicious for taking matters out of the
 Churches,

Church's, and putting them into private Hands, of any Protestant I ever yet read) would not take it very well if some Parishioner of yours, presuming upon his Prayers for Direction, &c. should tell you that you err'd in Interpreting Scripture, and that the Sense he gave it, was sound and right Faith, yours wrong and Heretical, and I would be glad to know what you would say to him, according to your Principles, if he should hap to stand out against you, that he understands Scripture to be plainly against a Trinity and *Christ's* Divinity, as *John Blinde* did against the Minister of his Parish, and the whole Church of *England* to boot. 'Tis plain you ought to cherish and commend him for standing firm to his Rule; But I am much afraid you would be out of humor with him, and esteem your self affronted. You may pretend what you please of high Expressions given by Antiquity, of Scripture's incomparable Excellency, and Sufficiency for the Ends it was intended for, which we do not deny to it; but I dare say, even your self do's not think, that either the Ancient Faithful, or the Modern Reformers, meant that any of the *Ecclesia credens*, or Believing Church, should have the liberty to Interpret Scripture against the *Ecclesia docens*, or Teaching Church, i. e. Pastors; or Coyn a Faith out of it, contrary to the present or former Congregation of which he was a Member.

26. The Tum is; 'Tis evident hence, that Tradition of your Fathers and Teachers, and not Scriptures Letter, is indeed your Rule; That by it you Interpret Scripture; which then only is call'd your Rule, and made use of as such, when you are Disputing against us; because having thrust it up, as a weight and counter-balance the Authority of the former Church you left, you make account your own private Interpretation of it

it may come to be thought Argumentative against the great Body of those Churches from whose Communion you departed; and yet you judge no private Parishioner should claim the same Priviledge against you, without affronting your great Learning, and Pastoral Authority. But I much wonder you should still venture to call Scripture's Letter a Rule of Faith, having been beaten from that Tenet so pitifully in *Error Nonplust*, from Pag. 59. to Pag. 71. where I believe you may observe divers Particulars requisite to be clear'd e're the Letter can be in all regards *Absolutely Certain*, which the Consent of all Christian Churches will never reach to by their meer Authority, unless you will allow the Sense of *Christ's* Doctrine descending by Tradition, did preserve the Copy substantially right and intire.

27. Your pretended Rule of Faith then, being in reality the same that is challeng'd by all the Heresies in the World, *viz.* Scripture's Letter interpreted by your selves; I will let you see in this following short Discourse, how far it is from being Absolutely Certain.

I. God has left us some Way to know Surely what *Christ* and his Apostles taught.

II. Therefore this Way must be such, that they who take it, shall arrive by it at the End it was intended for (that is) know surely what *Christ* and his Apostles taught.

III. Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments; in that Way, for the experience Presbyterians and Socinians (for example) both take that Way, yet differ in such high Fundamentals, as the Trinity, and the Godhead of *Christ*.

IV. The

IV. Therefore Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not the Way left by God to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or surely to arrive at right Faith.

V. Therefore they who take only that Way, cannot by it arrive surely at right Faith, since it is impossible to arrive at the End, without the Means or Way that leads to it.

28. I do not expect any Answer to this Discourse, as short as it is, and as plain and as nearly as it touches your Copyhold; it may be serv'd as Mr. G's Argument is, turn'd off so so with an Instance, if there be one at hand; or, with what always is at hand, an Irony or scornful Jest, your readiest; and, in truth, most useful Servants: But you must be excus'd from finding any Proposition or Inference to deny, or any thing, save the Conclusion it self: Which, tho' it will not be fairly avoided; I cannot hope should be fairly admitted, unless I could hope that Men would be more in love with Truth than their Credit. Till Truth be taken a little more to heart, Catholic Arguments will and must always be faulty; but they are the most unluckily and crosly faulty of any in the World; faulty still in the wrong place. When fault is found in other Arguments, it is always found in the Premises; in these, 'tis found in the Conclusion: Is which, notwithstanding, all who know any thing of a Conclusion, know there can be no fault, if there be none in the Premises. Indeed, they shew that to be true which Men cannot endure should be true; and that is their great and unpardonable fault. That you may not think I talk in the Air,

I declare openly, that you ~~cannot~~ Answer this Disobedience, unless you will call some unconcerning Assurance, ~~affirm~~ ^{affirm} and I engage myself to show the Proposition true, and the Inference good, which you shall pitch upon to deny; And the Distinction, if you will make any, not to purpose. The truth is, I engage for no great matter; for I know beforehand you can no more Answer now, than you could to *Error Nonplus*, or can prove an Absolute Certainty in Protestant Faith.

29. To return now to Mr. G. the Second thing which you desire him to make good, is, *That the Tradition from Father to Son is an infallible Conveyance of Matters of Faith, notwithstanding the Great Church is charged by him with Error, which adheres to Tradition.* That is, you desire him to prove over again, what you tell us your *Alibi* has prov'd once already. For you tell us (p. 3.), *As prov'd, That they [Traditionary Christians] would not succumb to Faith, unless they be forc'd what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it.* Pray, what it is prov'd, that the Conveyance of Faith by Tradition, excludes the possibility of Change in Faith, *Give by forgetfulness or malice.* Is it not prov'd, That, where there could be neither forgetfulness nor malice, there could be no change in Faith? You do not, I suppose, desire he should prove, that Men had always Memories, or that Christians were never malicious enough to damn themselves and Posterity wittingly; and yet I can show no where else: if it can, said Mr. G. assign where. Now you know very well, that a Conveyance which makes it impossible that Faith should ever be chang'd is an infallible Conveyance; and the very thing is prov'd which you desire should be prov'd. What reason has Mr. G. to prove it a second time? And what reason have you to desire it? If proof would content you, you

you have it already ; but a second cannot hope to content you better than the first, unless it be worse.

30. Yes, but you would have him prove, *Notwithstanding the Greek Church, &c. (p. 7.) Notwithstanding?* Why do you think it is with Arguments as with Writs, where the want of a *Non obstante* spoils all ? When a Truth is once prov'd, is it not prov'd, notwithstanding all Objections ? And will any *Notwithstanding* unprove it again ? Will your *Notwithstanding* shew us there was a time in which Men were not Men, nor acted like Men ? Will it shew us, that a thing which cannot possibly be chang'd, may yet possibly remain not the same ? Will it shew us, that a Cause can be without its Effect, or an Effect without its Cause ? Will it shew us, that a thing can be and not be at once ? Unless it can do such Feats as these, you may keep your *Notwithstanding* to your self, for any Service it will do you here : For all the *Notwithstanding's* in the world cannot hinder a thing which is true, from being true ; nor the Proof which proves it to be true, from being a Proof. Mr. G's Proof shews, that Tradition from Father to Son is an Infalible Conveyance of Faith, as plainly, as that Men are Men : And would you persuade us with the Rhetorick of your *Notwithstanding*, that we do not see what we see ? Tho' you had brought twenty of them instead of one, we could see nothing by them, but that you had a good Fancy ; for they shew us nothing of the Object, nor offer at it. You shew us not how the Operations of Human Nature should be suspended in our present Case, nor any thing which should or could suspend them, but would have us believe Men were prodigiously forgetful or malicious, purely for the sake of an Imagination of yours. I pray rub up afresh your old

Logical Notions, and reflect whether it were ever heard of in University Disputes, that when an Argument is advanc'd, the Defendant is allow'd to make Objections against it; and instead of Answering, bid the Arguer prove his Conclusions to be true, *Notwithstanding* all his Objections? Consider how perfectly this confounds the Offices of the Disputant and Defendant, and makes all Regular Discourse impossible. Consider how this new Method of yours destroys the very possibility of ever concluding any thing, that is, the very Faculty of Reasoning; for Objections being generally multipliable without end, if all of them must be Solv'd ere any Argument concludes, nothing will be concluded, nor any Conclusion admitted: And so at long so Farewel to Rational Nature. Consider that Truth is built on its own Intrinsic Grounds, and not on the Solving Objections. For your own Credits sake then with Learned Men and Logicians, do not seek to evade with *Notwithstanding's*, but Answer fairly and squarely to the Argument as it lies: Consider, that who has found the Cause, has found the Effect. Mr. G. has found us a Cause of Infallible Conveyance, and therefore has shew'd us an Infallible Conveyance. You pretend, that tho' there was the Cause, there was not the Effect; and this 'tis known beforehand cannot be, and you knew it as well as any body: But you knew likewise there was no saving your Stakes without playing a new Game; and therefore, give you your due, did all that could be done, in trying to divert our sight from a Matter plain before us, and amuse us with a Matter of Fact, which you are sure will be obscure enough, by that time it is handled long enough. The Terms you put, viz. *Tradition*, *Error*, and the

Greek

Greek Church, must needs bring into Dispute, whether such and so many Quotations, or some one or two Men disclaiming their Tenet to be a Novelty, be a Proof of Tradition from Father to Son; whether the Error be any Error; and whether, and for how much, an Error in *Faith*, and how much of it belongs to *Divinity*; whether the *Greek Church* be engag'd by a Citation from a Greek Author; of two that be cited, one against another, which shall be prefer'd, and thought to speak the sense of his Church; and which is a Latiniz'd, which a frank Grecian. And who shall see through the Mists which these Disputes will raise? More too will fall in in process of time: There will be wrangling about the sense of Words, the propriety of Phrases, the preference of Readings, and twenty such important quarrels; which will tire out every body, and satisfy no body. In short, you saw that if you could persuade People not to think the Church of *Rome* Infallible, till all be said, which will occur to be said of the *Greek Church*, you are safe enough, For Doomsday will come before that day. Till then you may carry it with a shew of Erudition, because there must be abundance of Greek cited. And this is all which can come of your Instance; and I wish it were not all you had in your Eye.

31. In the mean time you have not answer'd Mr. G. because you have found no fault in any Proposition, or in the Inference of his Argument; and therefore it rests with you to answer it. He has answer'd you; because he has found this fault with your Instance, which you make your Antecedent, that it is not true; and that the *Greek Church* did not at once

ern in Faith, and adhere to Tradition; and therefore
 it rests again with you to prove it; and yet while you
 are *Debet* both ways, you call upon him to *pay*. Ere
 we part, Take this along with you, that the Debt
 which you are precisely bound to satisfy, first is to
 answer his Argument; and till you do this, you can
 claim no right to *Object* or *Argue*.

I am

SIR

Your humble Servant.

31. In the mean time you have not answered Mr.
 G. because you have found no fault in any Proposition
 put for in the Inference of his Argument; and there-
 fore it rests with you to answer it. He has answered
 you; because he has found this fault with your In-
 stance, which you make your Antecedent, that it is
 not true; and that the Greek Church did not at once

